Take Care

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HARIJAN

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NOTES

My Statue !

There is a talk in Bombay of spending ten lacs of rupees on erecting my statue on a public site. I have received several letters criticizing, some even fiercely, the proposal as if I were guilty of making any such extravagant proposal! It is perhaps human nature to make a mountain out of a mole hill. Only the wise sift the grain from the chaff. In the present case there seems to be a foundation for the criticism. I must say that I have a dislike even for being photographed; nevertheless, photographs have been taken of me. I have let artists make models more than once. Notwithstanding this inconsistency, I must dissent emphatically from any proposal to spend any money on preparing a statue of me, more especially at a time when people do not have enough food and clothing. In Bombay the beautiful, insanitation reigns. There is so much overcrowding that poor people are packed like sardines. Wise use of ten lacs of rupees will consist in its being spent on some public utility. That would be the best statue. Money thus wisely spent will make an adequate return. Imagine how many hungry mouths would be filled if the amount was spent on growing more food crops !

New Delhi, 13-9-'47

(From the original in Gujarati)

Task before Ministers

I have before me quite a number of letters fiercely criticizing what they consider to be their luxurious life. They accuse them too of favouritism, even nepotism. I know that much criticism comes from ignorance. Ministers should not be sensitive. They would take in good part even carping criticism. They would be surprised if I were to send them the letters I receive; probably, they receive worse. Be that as it may, the moral I draw from them is that the critics expect much more from these chosen servants of the people than from others in the way of simplicity, courage, honesty and industry. In this matter we cannot imitate the English rulers of the past, except perhaps in industry and discipline. The whole purpose of this note will be served if on the one hand the ministers profit by valid criticism and the critics learn to be sober and precise about their facts. Inaccuracy or exaggeration spoils a good case.

On the train to Delhi, 8-9-'47

M. K. G.

DR. JOSHI

Dr. Joshi, the famous surgeon of Delhi, fell a victim to communal frenzy on the 8th instant. Delhi is today sheltering nearly two lacs of Hindu and Sikh refugees from the Pakistan areas. There are camps also for Muslim refugees from shattered areas seeking shelter from maddened Hindu and Sikh crowds. The tales of horrors have poisoned the atmosphere. The sufferers are full of anger and a desire for revenge. Gandhiji has been crying himself hoarse to impress upon the minds of the people that true revenge lies in returning good for evil. It is utterly wrong to make the Muslims of Hindustan pay for the sins of their brethren in Pakistan.

The mob fury broke out in Delhi on the 5th of this month. Dr. Joshi had his hospital in Karol Bagh — a Muslim locality, where he had been serving Hindus and Muslims for the last 16 years. Patients came to him from all over North India. He was a brilliant surgeon and had plenty of rich clinical material at his hospital. He was anxious that it should be used for post-graduate training. His ambition was to have in India an institution like the Mayo Clinics of America, where he had his surgical training. He had even bought land for that purpose at Dehra Dun. "Why should the credit for all research and vital discoveries go to the West?" he used to say. "How did they learn? We can do the same." And if God had given him a longer lease of life, he would have done it.

His one passion in life was surgery and, as he put it, the study of human nature and character, of which he had ample opportunities in his profession. He used to work from 8 a. m. till 6 p. m. or later without a break. And after that he studied medical literature. He was a great humanitarian and not only treated the poor free of charge, but provided them with free food and money for return fare from his own pocket. Last year I had occasion to visit the hill tribes in Jaunsar Bawar near Dehra Dun in connection with the medical work of the Kasturba Trust. I found in that distant corner poor hill folk making anxious enquiries about Dr. Joshi. He had come to a nearby State on a professional visit sometime before my visit. Finding some interesting surgical cases among the poor people, he had brought them with him to Delhi, treated them and sent them back at his own cost. This had naturally made the hill tribes of that locality look upon him as a friend and saviour.

When the trouble broke out in Karol Bagh in the neighbourhood of his hospital, a brave man that

he was, he came out and went round comforting his patients. During his visits he received a bullet in his forehead. There are several versions, but the likelihood is that it was a deliberate murder. A second bullet went through his heart and a third through his thigh. Three men were shot dead in attempting to remove the dead body. Dr. Joshi's loss is a loss to the nation and to humanity. Let us hope that with Dr. Joshi's death his project for the advancement of surgery in India will not be dropped. Able men should come forward and work out his plan. That will be a worthy memorial to that worthy son of India.

New Delhi, 13-9-'47 S. N.

GANDHIJI'S PRESS STATEMENTS

I

MAN PROPOSES, GOD DISPOSES

"Man proposes, God disposes" has come true often enough in my lifetime as it must have done in many others'. I knew nothing about the sad state of things in Delhi when I left Calcutta on Sunday last. On reaching Delhi, I have been listening the whole day long to the tale of woe that is Delhi today. I saw several Muslim friends who recited their pathetic story. I heard enough to warn me that I must not leave Delhi for the Punjab until it had regained its former self.

I must do my little bit to calm the heated atmosphere. I must apply the old formula "Do or Die" to the Capital of India. I am glad to be able to say that the residents of Delhi do not want the senseless destruction that is going on. I am prepared to understand the anger of the refugees whom fate has driven from West Punjab. But anger is short madness. It can only make matters worse in every way. Retaliation is no remedy. It makes the original disease much worse. I, therefore, ask all those who are engaged in the senseless murders, arson and loot to stay their hands.

The Central Government, the ablest, the most courageous and the most self-sacrificing team that the Union could produce, have not been in the saddle for even a month after the declaration of Indian independence. It is criminal and suicidal not to give them a chance to set the house in order. I am fully aware of the shortage of food. Mob rule is dislocating everything making distribution of foodstuffs all but impossible. May God restore peace to distracted Delhi.

I would close with the hope that Calcutta will fulfil the promise made on my departure and which sustains me in the midst of the surrounding madness.

New Delhi, 9-9-'47

II

SANITATION IN REFUGEE CAMPS

During the day Rajkumari Amrit Kaur took me and Dr. Sushila Nayyar to the Irwin Hospital which devotes its energies only to the treatment of injured persons, irrespective of caste or creed. Among the patients was a child, hardly five years old, who had received a bullet wound. The doctors and nurses were working under great stress. The majority of patients were Muslims, as the Hindus and Sikhs were transferred to other hospitals.

I understand from Rajkumari that it was well-nigh impossible to supply refugee camps with *bhangis* for attending to the cleaning of the latrines and general sanitation. Any infectious disease like cholera might break out. I have no doubt whatsoever that the refugees should look after sanitation, including latrine cleaning in their own camps and should do some useful work with the approval of the camp superintendent. There can be no exception to this rule, save for persons who are incapable of physical exertion. All camps should be models of cleanliness, simplicity and industry.

During the day I had a visit from the Pakistan High Commissioner, who is an enthusiastic believer in communal peace and friendship. I had a visit too from Sikh friends twice during the day. They were sore about the *kirpan* order of the Government of India. They have promised to give me their requirement in writing before I speak to the Government. They further said that allegations made against them were highly coloured. They said they could have no quarrel with the Muslims or any other communities living in the Union. They were anxious to be law-abiding citizens of the State.

New Delhi, 11-9-'47

GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

Calcutta, 31-8-'47

DUTY OF THE RICH

Gandhiji and Shaheed Saheb first met the wealthy men — Hindus, Muslims and Europeans at the Grand Hotel and appealed to them to find the money required for rebuilding the destroyed *bustees* and other buildings. After being there for nearly one hour they came to hold the prayer meeting at Baghmari Park. In his speech before the moneyed men he said that he went to them as a beggar. Somehow or other when he began life after his studies he found that he had the gift of begging from the rich and the poor alike. He hoped that his appeal would not go in vain. There were two ways of rebuilding and rehabilitation — either the Government or the rich men of Calcutta had to find the money. He held that if the Government found the funds, it would carry no merit. But if the moneyed men took up the duty, it carried double merit. They, as citizens, would have of their own free will discharged their duty and it would be a substantial proof of real friendship between the communities.

The spectacular meetings were, no doubt, necessary, but they were not all. That which led to permanent friendship was contented rehabilitation. All parties, all groups had to do their duty in the direction. For the purity of hearts it was necessary for all to forget the past. Forgetfulness properly cultivated was a great gift. It was a rich gift bestowed upon man by the Maker. The rich men would not be able to put their hands into their

pockets if they had not the faculty for forgetting the past. He asked the rich men, after Shaheed Saheb and he had withdrawn, to sit together and not to leave the hotel till they had come to a wise decision.

MUSLIMS' GOOD WORK

Then the party drove to Baghmari Park where the prayer meeting was to be held. After prayer Gandhiji said that as he had addressed the meeting of the wealthy men, he did not propose to say much to the audience. He was glad to be informed by Kamal Babu, their M. L. A., that there was now perfect friendship between the two communities and that the evacuees were ready to return. The great obstacle was that the factories where they were earning their livelihood had not started working. The Muslim neighbours had undertaken to renovate the evacuated premises. If all the information was cent per cent true, the truth will work its way into the whole of the affected parts of Calcutta. He informed the audience that he proposed to leave for Noakhali on Tuesday. If Shaheed Saheb too could accompany him at the same time, he would do so. He did not propose to stay in Noakhali for long and hoped to return to Calcutta to finish the work that had begun under happy auspices. Meanwhile, he hoped that the work of rehabilitation would be continued with double speed. It did not admit of delay if there was to be lasting peace.

Calcutta, 6-9-'47

Gandhiji referring to the Deputy Mayor's speech said that the word farewell was misapplied. He had made his home in Calcutta among the Muslim friends in Beliaghatta and not in Sodepur Khadi Pratishthan which was his permanent home. He would not even allow Hemprobha Devi and her co-workers to come to his new abode for looking after him. He said that he would be satisfied with what Muslim friends gave him in the shape of service. He had made no mistake. He was in the habit of living comfortably in Muslim homes in South Africa.

SHAHEED SAHEB

He then referred to the martyrdom of Sachin Mittra and Smritish Banerjee. He was not sorry. Such innocent deaths were necessary to keep the two communities together. Let them not make the mistake that such martyrs were to be found among Hindus only. He could cite several instances of Muslims who had lost their lives in the act of protecting Hindus. He had similar personal experiences in life. There was evil and good among all communities and climes. That brought him to Shaheed Saheb about whom he had many Hindus coming to him, and many letters from them to the effect that he was a fool to have accepted Shaheed Saheb as his associate in the task. He must say that he was no fool. He knew what he was doing. He had nothing to do with what Shaheed Saheb had done in the past. But he (Gandhiji) was there to testify that he (Shaheed Saheb) had given his full co-operation all the precious days they were together. He was free to confess that without his valuable help they would not have found him (Gandhiji) working in their midst. It was an insult to intelligence to think that there could be any base motive behind the work into which he had thrown himself with his whole heart. He had a palatial house and a brother whom he regarded as superior to him in talent. He had another whom Gandhiji had the pleasure of knowing in London at the Round Table Conference and who was Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University. His uncle Sir Abdulla was the author of the *Sayings of the Prophet*. If they distrusted the motives, they would be vastly mistaken. Neither they nor anybody else had any right to question a man's motives. The speaker said that he would not like his motives to be judged against his action to the contrary. That was the only right way to get on with people. They should know that he had been condemned to their knowledge as enemy No. 1 of Islam and that in spite of his protestations to the contrary. Would the audience, therefore, like the Muslims never to accept his actions at their worth ?

Lastly, let them consider the awful consequence of such distrust. It might ruin the present unity and thus jeopardize what probably was the only chance of saving the Punjab from fratricidal strife.

He then referred to the *Shanti Sena* and other organizations which were doing strenuous work to preserve peace. Women had come forward to do their bit. The students had excelled themselves in their devotion to the cause of communal amity. Some young men had brought their unlicensed arms including sten guns, hand-grenades and other less destructive weapons. He thanked them for their courage in bringing them to him. He hoped that the good example would be copied by all possessors, Hindus and Muslims, of unlicensed arms. It would be a proof of mutual trust and trust in God. He was assured by the Chief Minister that those who delivered up such arms within a given date (the shorter the better) would be thanked for their open help in the work of peace and that no punishment would be inflicted on them, now or hereafter, for what was undoubtedly an offence. He asked, therefore, all such possessors to deliver these to the authorities or to their friends, to be delivered to the authorities.

He congratulated the Corporation staff which the Deputy Mayor told him, had worked the whole night for completing the arrangements for the meeting which was so well attended in spite of the rains.

Last of all, he told them that by breaking the fast only after one day's absence of strife, on the strength of the pressure of friends drawn from all communities in Calcutta and outside, he threw the burden on them of preservation of peace at the cost of their lives. Let them not be guilty of having, though unwittingly, brought about his death by the abrupt end of the fast. He could have, as they might have, waited for some days to enable him to gauge the situation for himself; but he could not properly do so in the face of the earnestness of friends, say like Shri N. C. Chatterjee.

(Continued on p. 333)

HARIJAN

September 21 1947

TAKE CARE

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Unless the Governments and their Secretariats take care, the English language is likely to usurp the place of Hindustani. This must do infinite harm to the millions of India who would never be able to understand English. Surely, it must be quite easy for the provincial governments to have a staff which would carry on all transactions in the provincial languages and the inter-provincial language, which, in my opinion, can only be Hindustani written in *nagari* or *urdu* script.

Every day lost in making this necessary change is so much cultural loss to the nation. The first and foremost thing is to revive the rich provincial languages with which India is blessed. It is nothing short of mental sluggishness to plead that in our courts, in our schools and even in the Secretariats, some time, probably a few years, must lapse before the change is made. No doubt a little difficulty will be felt in multi-lingual Provinces, as in Bombay and Madras, until redistribution of Provinces takes place on the linguistic basis. Provincial Governments can devise a method in order to enable the people in those Provinces to feel that they have come into their own. Nor need the Provinces wait for the Union for solving the question, whether for inter-provincial speech it shall be Hindustani written in either *nagari* or *urdu* script or mere Hindi written in *nagari*. This should not detain them in making the desired reform. It is a wholly unnecessary controversy likely to be the door through which English may enter to the eternal disgrace of India. If the first step, that is, revival of provincial speech in all public departments takes place immediately, that of inter-provincial speech will follow in quick succession. The Provinces will have to deal with the Centre. They dare not do so through English, if the Centre is wise enough quickly to realize that they must not tax the nation culturally for the sake of a handful of Indians who are too lazy to pick up the speech which can be easily common to the whole of India without offending any party or section. My plea is for banishing English as a cultural usurper as we successfully banished the political rule of the English usurper. The rich English language will ever retain its natural place as the international speech of commerce and diplomacy.

New Delhi, 11-9-'47

BIHAR FOR BIHARIS AND INDIA

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Bihar is undoubtedly for Biharis but it is also for India. What is true of Bihar is equally true of all the provinces in the Union. No Indian can be treated as a foreigner in Bihar as he may be treated in Pakistan of today and vice versa. It is necessary to bear this difference in mind if we are to avoid difficulties and heart-burn.

Though then every Indian of the Union has a right to settle in Bihar, he must not do so to oust the Biharis. If the qualification was not actively operated, it is possible to conceive such an inrush of non-Bihari Indians as to flood out the Biharis. We are thus forced to the conclusion that a non-Bihari who settles in Bihar must do so to serve Bihar, not to exploit it after the manner of our old masters.

This way of examining the proposition brings us to the question of the zamindars and the ryots. When a non-Bihari enters Bihar for the sake of making money, he will in all probability do so to exploit the ryot in league with the zamindars. If the zamindars really became the trustees of their zamindari for the sake of the ryots, there never could be an unholy league as has been here conceived. There is the difficult zamindari question awaiting solution in Bihar. What one would love to see is proper, impartial and satisfactory understanding between the zamindars, big and small, the ryots and the Government so that when the law is passed it may not be a dead letter nor need force be used against the zamindars or the ryots. Would that all changes, some of which must be radical, take place throughout India without bloodshed and without force! So much for the new-comer from the other provinces of India.

What about the services? It seems that if the provinces are all to make equal progress in all directions, the services should be largely confined to the inhabitants of the province concerned for the sake of India as a whole. No province and no tribe or clan can be kept backward if India is to stand up erect before the world. It will never do so through its arms of which the world is sick. It must shine through its innate culture expressed in every citizen's life and in the socialism I have recently described in these columns. That means elimination of all force for the sake of popularizing one's doctrines or schemes. A thing which is truly popular rarely, if ever, requires force save that of public opinion to make itself acceptable to all. Therefore, the ugly scenes of violence by individuals witnessed in Bihar and Orissa and Assam should never have been. Popular governments are functioning to redress any irregularity or encroachment by persons from other provinces. The provincial governments are bound to give full protection to all the comers from outside their provinces. "Use what you consider yours so as not to injure others," is a famous maxim of equity. It is also a grand moral code of conduct. How apposite today?

Hitherto I have dealt with the question of new arrivals. What of those who were on the 15th of August in Bihar — some in Government employment and some otherwise employed? So far as I can see, they should be on the same footing as the Biharis unless they make another choice. Naturally, they should not form a separate colony as if they were foreigners. "Live in Rome as the Romans do," is a sound commonsense maxim so long as it does not apply to Roman vices. The process of progressive blending must be one of rejecting the bad and absorbing the good. As a Gujarati in Bengal, I must quickly absorb all that is good in Bengal and never touch that which is bad; I must ever serve Bengal, never selfishly exploit it. The bane of our life is our exclusive provincialism, whereas my province must be co-extensive with the Indian boundary so that ultimately it extends to the boundary of the earth. Else, it perishes.

On the train to Delhi, 8-9-'47

PROHIBITION OF INTOXICANTS

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

This is the fittest time for this reform. There is a people's Government. Both parts of India including the Indian States are ready for the reform. All over the two parts there is a shortage of foodstuffs and clothing. Dare one think of indulging in intoxicants — drinks or drugs — when people are on the borderland of starvation and nakedness? The money spent on wines and opiates is not only a waste, but it adds to it loss of self-control. One labouring under the influence of intoxicants will do things which he will never do in a sober state. Thus from every point of view prohibition is a vital necessity.

We cannot eradicate the evil merely by passing laws. The addict will manage to satisfy his craving anyhow. Those carrying on the black trade will not readily give it up.

Therefore, the following steps will have to be taken simultaneously in order to make a success of the reform:

1. Passing of the requisite law.
2. Educating public opinion.
3. Opening at the same place as grog shops refreshment rooms selling harmless drinks and providing innocent entertainment in the form of books, newspapers, games etc.
4. The income from the sale of intoxicants should be spent on cultivating public opinion in favour of prohibition.

It is criminal to spend the income from the sale of intoxicants on the education of the nation's children or other public services. The Government must overcome the temptation of using such revenue for nation-building purposes. Experience has shown that the moral and physical gain of the abstainer more than makes up for the loss of this tainted revenue. If we eradicate the evil, we will easily find other ways and means of increasing the nation's income.

On the train to Delhi, 8-9-'47

(*From the original in Gujarati*)

GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

(Continued from p. 331)

the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Shaheed Saheb and others too numerous to mention, but he threw all the greater weight on the shoulders of all Calcutta citizens and sojourners. What they wanted was not peace imposed by the Government forces but by themselves. If unfortunately it was broken, there would be no alternative but a fast unto death. He could not, like a child, play with them and each time say, he was going to break his fast if they resumed sanity. He made that solemn declaration for Bihar, then for Noakhali and now for Calcutta. As his life was made, he had no other alternative. If God willed that he should still do some service, He would bless all with wisdom to do the right thing in the matter. Consider the consequence of Calcutta remaining sane. It must mean the automatic sanity of all Bengal, East and West. It meant also Bihar and consequently the Punjab where God was sending him, and if the Punjab came to its senses, the rest of India was bound to follow. So may God help them all.

New Delhi, 10-9-'47

CITY OF THE DEAD

Though the audience owing to the curfew was small, Gandhiji spoke for the whole of Delhi. He said that when he reached Shahadra he found Sardar Patel, Rajkumari and others to receive him. But he missed the usual smile on the Sardar's lips and his apt jokes. The police and the public whom he met on alighting from the train reflected the gloom he noticed around him. Had jovial Delhi suddenly become a city of the dead? Another surprise was in store for him. He was taken not to the Bhangi Colony where he delighted to stay, but to the palatial Birla House. Though the cause of it hurt him, he was glad to find himself in the house where he had often stayed before. Whether he stayed among the *Valmiki* brethren or in the Birla House, he was the guest of Birla Brothers. Their men looked after him in the Bhangi Colony with single-minded devotion. The cause of the change was not the Sardar. He could never be guilty of weakness so as to fear for his safety in the Valmiki Colony. It was his delight to live in the midst of the *bhangis*, though through the New Delhi Committee's fault he could not live actually in the houses in which the *bhangis* were packed like sardines.

THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

The cause of the change this time was the fact that the premises he occupied were being used for the refugees whose need was infinitely greater than his. Was it not to their shame as a nation that there should be any refugee problem at all? Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, Liaquat Saheb and other Pakistan leaders had proclaimed in common with Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel that the minorities would be treated in the respective dominions with the same consideration as the majorities. Was this said by each to tickle the world with sweet words

or was it meant to show the world that we meant what we had said and that we would die in the attempt to redeem the word. If so, he asked why were the Hindus and Sikhs and the proud Amils and Bhaibunds driven to leave Pakistan which was their home ? What had happened in Quetta, Nawabshah and Karachi ? The tales that one heard and read from Western Pakistan were heart-breaking. It would not do for either party to plead helplessness and say that it was all the work of *goondas*. Each dominion was bound to take full responsibility for the acts of those who were living in either dominion. "Theirs was not to reason why, theirs was but to do and die." No longer did they work willynilly under the crushing weight of imperialism. But it could never mean that there was now to be no rule of law if they were to face the world squarely in the face. Were the Union ministers to declare their bankruptcy and shamelessly own to the world that the people of Delhi or the refugees would not cheerfully and voluntarily obey the rule of law ? He would like the ministers to break in the attempt to wean the people from their madness rather than bend. The speaker's voice was very low throughout but he went on to give an account of his tour through Delhi which looked like a city of the dead. He incidentally mentioned that even in the house he lived in, there was neither fruit nor vegetables to be had. Was it not a shame that no vegetables were to be had in Subzimandi because some Muslims had opened fire with a machine-gun and otherwise? In his wanderings he heard complaints that the refugees were without rations. What was issued was not worth eating. If the fault was of the administration, it was equally of the refugees who had paralysed even necessary activities. Why did they not realize that they harmed themselves ? If they trusted the Government to secure redress for all their legitimate grievances and acted as law-abiding citizens, he knew, as they should know, that most of their difficulties would be over.

He paid a visit to the Meo Refugee Camp near the Humayun Tomb. They said that they were driven out from Alwar and Bharatpur States. He was told that they had no food save what was sent to them by Muslim friends. He knew that the Meos were easily excitable and could cause trouble. The remedy was certainly not to pack them off to Pakistan unless they wanted to go there, but to treat them as fellow human beings demanding treatment for their weaknesses like any other disease.

He then went to the Jamia Millia in whose shaping he had played a vital part. Dr. Zakir Hussain was his dear friend. The doctor described his experiences certainly in sorrow but without bitterness. Just a short time ago he had to go to Jullunder. He would have been done to death by angry Sikhs for the crime of being a Muslim but for the timely aid of a Sikh Captain and a Hindu railway employee. He gratefully related this experience. Imagine the fact that this national institution where several Hindus had studied was in fear of receiving attention from angered refugees and their abettors. He saw over 100 refugees accommodated somehow in the Jamia premises. He hung his head in shame as he heard the sorry recital of the refugees' difficulties. He then went to the Diwan Hall Refugee Camp, the Wavell Canteen Camp and King's Way. He met there Sikh and Hindu refugees. They could not quite forget his past services to the Punjab. But some pardonably angry faces were in all these camps. He was accused of hardness of heart towards the Hindus. He had not suffered as they had. He had not lost his dear ones as they had, nor had he, like them, been rendered homeless and penniless. How could he console them by saying that he had stayed in Delhi to do what he could in assisting to make the Capital of India return to normality ? He could not bring back the dead ones. But death was a blessing bestowed by the Creator on all life, human and sub-human. The difference lay in the time and the manner. Right conduct was the only right way of life which made it bearable and even lovely.

A True Sikh

A Sikh friend had seen him during the day. He said that though he was born a Sikh, he could not claim to be one in the light of the *Granth Saheb*. The speaker asked him whether he knew any such claimant. The friend could not think of any. Then Gandhiji quietly put in his claim. He claimed to be attempting to live as a Sikh in terms of the *Granth Saheb*. Time was when in the Nankana Saheb he was accepted as a true friend of the Sikhs. Guru Nanak made no distinction between a Muslim and a Hindu. For him the whole humanity was one. Such was his (Gandhiji's) Sanatan Hindu Dharma. As such he claimed also to be a Muslim. He recited the great Muslim prayer on the oneness of God and His all-protecting power day and night.

He asked all the refugees to live truly, fearlessly and at the same time without malice or hatred towards anybody. Let them not throw away the golden apple of dearly-won freedom by hasty and thoughtless action in the moment of anger.

New Delhi, 12-9-'47

News from N. W. F. P.

Gandhiji began his prayer address this evening by expressing his infinite sorrow at the disturbing news that was coming through from the Frontier Province. He knew that province well. For weeks he had toured there and lived under the roof of the Khan Brothers in perfect safety. It pained him beyond measure, therefore, to have been shown a telegram during the day from Shri Girdhari Lal Puri, an ex-minister, saying that he and his wife, both good workers, should be rescued at once. Such news made him hang his head in shame and it was up to the Government today in power and the Qaid-e-Azam to see to it that all the Hindus and the Sikhs were as safe there as the Muslims.

Anger Is Short Madness

While deploring the sad happenings in the N. W. F. P., however, Gandhiji impressed on the audience that anger was not going to lead them

anywhere. Anger bred revenge and the spirit of revenge was today responsible for all the horrible happenings there and elsewhere. What good will it do the Muslims to avenge the happenings in Delhi or for the Sikhs and the Hindus to avenge cruelties on their co-religionists in the Frontier and West Punjab? If a man or a group of men went mad, should everyone follow suit? Gandhiji warned the Hindus and the Sikhs that by killing and loot and arson they were destroying their own religions. He claimed to be a student of religion and he knew that no religion taught madness. Islam was no exception. He implored them all to stop their insane actions at once. Let not future generations say that you lost the sweet bread of freedom because you could not digest it. Remember that unless you stop this madness the name of India will be mud in the eyes of the world.

FORGET THE PAST

Gandhiji talked of his visit to the beautiful Jumma Masjid—second to no mosque in the world. It pained him to see Muslim men and women there in deep distress. He tried to comfort the sufferers by saying that death had to come to all. It was no good weeping for the dead. It would not bring back the dead. It was up to everyone to save the future of this great land. Many Muslim friends came to see him daily. He advised them to state their position frankly and fully. He was sorry that the lives of Muslims should be in danger in Delhi or any part of India. It was a big tragedy. Gandhiji implored them to listen to an old man who had been through many experiences during his long life. He was absolutely convinced that to return evil for evil led nowhere. To return good for good was no virtue. The true way was to return good for evil. Many Muslim friends would like to help. But it was impossible to requisition their active services in Delhi today.

In soul-stirring words Gandhiji appealed to the Sikhs, the Hindus and the Muslims to forget the past, not to dwell on their sufferings but to extend the right hand of fellowship to each other and determine to live at peace with each other. Muslims must be proud to belong to the Indian Union, they must salute the Tri-Colour. If they were loyal to their religion no Hindu could be their enemy. Similarly the Hindus and the Sikhs must welcome peace-loving Muslims in their midst. He had been told that the Muslims here were in possession of arms. They should surrender these at once and the Government here should take no action against them. The Hindus and the Sikhs must do likewise. He had also been told that the West Punjab Government was arming the Muslims. If this was true, it was wholly wrong and would in the long run lead to their own destruction. It should cease forthwith. No one anywhere should have unlicensed arms.

Gandhiji begged of them all to bring about peace quickly in Delhi so that he might be able to proceed to both East and West Punjab. He had only one mission and his message was the same for everyone. Let it be said of them that the inhabitants of Delhi had gone mad temporarily but that sanity had now returned. Let them allow their Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to hold up their heads again. Today they were bowed in shame and sorrow. They had a priceless heritage. Let them remember that it was a joint one. It was their duty to guard it and keep it unsullied.

RASHTRIYA SEVA SANGHA

In conclusion Gandhiji referred to his and Dr. Dinshaw Mehta's talk with the *Guru* of the Rashtriya Seva Sangh. He (Gandhiji) had been told that the hands of this organization too were steeped in blood. The *Guruji* assured him that this was untrue. Their organization was enemy to no man. It did not stand for the killing of Muslims. All it wanted to do was to protect Hinduism to the best of its ability. It stood for peace and he had asked Gandhiji to make his views public.

New Delhi, 13-9-'47

TRUST THE GOVERNMENT

At the outset, Gandhiji referred to the days in 1915 when he lived under the late Principal Rudra's roof. He was as staunch a Christian as he was a son of India. It was he who brought Gandhiji in contact with the late Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari, both of whom looked upon Hindus, Muslims and other Indians with even affection and regard. He knew that thousands of poor Hindus received free treatment from Hakim Saheb. He was without doubt the loved *Sardar* of all Delhi. Were these men to be classed as unworthy? It was a matter of shame that Dr. Ansari's daughter Zohra and her husband Dr. Shaukatullah Khan should have to abandon their home and live in a hotel for fear of the Hindus and the Sikhs. He was free to confess that he would lose all interest in life if Muslims who had produced such men could not live with perfect safety in the Union. It was suggested to him that the Muslims were all fifth columnists in the Union. He declined to believe in that sweeping condemnation. There were four and a half crores of Muslims in the Union. If they were all so bad, they would dig the grave of Islam. The Qaid-e-Azam had asked the Muslims of the Union to be loyal to it. Let people trust their Government to deal with traitors. They must not take the law into their own hands.

GOD IS THE REFUGE OF ALL

Gandhiji then reported to the prayer audience that he was able to visit only one refugee camp and that in the Old Fort. It contained many Muslim refugees. As his car passed through the crowd, many more refugees seemed to be coming. Though the crowd was large and the commandant was absent, Gandhiji insisted on saying a few words of cheer to the refugees. The Muslim workers requested the crowd to sit down and give a patient hearing to the speaker. They sat down and only those on the fringe kept standing. There was anger in their looks. The Muslim volunteers reasoned those into silence who were insistent on ejaculations.

He had not much to say. He rested on Dewan Chamanlal's shoulders and asked him to repeat in his loud voice the few sentences he pronounced in his feeble voice. He urged them to be calm and shed anger. He said that God was the refuge of all, not man, however highly placed he may be. God would make right what man spoiled. On his part he promised not to rest till peace again ruled Delhi as it did before many men of both the communities had gone mad.

Duty of the Two Dominions

During day he had seen many Muslim and Hindu friends. It was the same sad tale of woes whether recited by Hindu sufferers or Muslim. It was a shame for both. He claimed to be the equal servant of all. He wished they could unitedly make up their minds that transfer of population was a fatal snare. It meant nothing but greater misery. The solution lay in both living in peace and friendship in their own original homes. It would be madness to make the present estrangement into permanent enmity. It was the bounden duty of each Dominion to guarantee full protection to their minorities. Let the two thrash the question out among themselves or if need be fight it out and make of themselves the laughing stock of the world.

Gandhiji missed, therefore, in the Qaid-e-Azam's fervent appeal for funds for the Muslim evacuees from the Union, any reference to the misdeeds of the Muslims in Pakistan. He pleaded for a frank and bold acknowledgment by the respective Governments of the misdeeds of their majorities.

Asaf Ali Saheb

Lastly, Gandhiji wished to refer to a vague insinuation against Asaf Ali Saheb, their Ambassador in America. He had been a Congressman ever since he had known him. He was a friend of the late Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari, as he is of the Maulana Saheb, who was Congress President for many years and had always been known as a staunch nationalist. He knew that Asaf Saheb was not recalled from America, but that he had come to consult the Prime Minister on many important questions. It was a matter of shame that such Muslims should not feel at ease with every Hindu and Sikh. It was wrong that a single Muslim should feel unsafe in Delhi, his Capital.

New Delhi, 14-9-'47

Our Degradation

Gandhiji said that he went to two Muslim refugees' camps in Idgah and opposite. No Muslim bore an angry look. They seemed to be poor. There was a very old man who was mere skin and bone. Every rib was to be seen. He was stabbed in several places. By his side was a woman equally injured. Though not so old, she was in a dilapidated condition. He hung his head in shame when he saw them. For him all men and women were the same, no matter what religion they professed.

Sanitation of Refugee Camps

Then he observed the insanitation of the camps. They were filthy beyond description. In the Idgah the tank was dry. He did not inquire where the refugees could get their water from. The inmates performed natural functions anyhow. If he was the camp commandant and the military and the police were under him, he would take up the shovel and the pickaxe himself and ask the help of the military and the police to do likewise and then ask the refugees to follow suit so that the camps would be in a perfectly sanitary condition. As it was, the ground itself was a rubbish heap on which no human being should be asked to live before it was thoroughly cleaned out. It required no money, it required a little forethought and the possession of a sanitary sense which would refuse to tolerate insanitation. The Hindu camps were no better on this score. Insanitation was a national defect or better still a vice of which as a free nation the sooner they got rid the better it was for them.

Duty of the Governments and the People

From these camps his thoughts turned to the cause of this dislocation on a scale which arrested the progress of the nation. Why were so many Hindus and Sikhs coming away from the Western Pakistan provinces? Was it a crime to be a Hindu or a Sikh? Or were they coming away out of sheer cussedness? Or was it a punishment for what their confreres had done in the East? Then he thought of the Union. Why were the Muslims of Delhi frightened into leaving their homes? Had both the Governments broken down? Why did the populace ignore its Government? The Muslims had unlicensed arms. There was the Government to see to it that those arms were taken away from the unlawful possessors. If they were incompetent, they were to give place to better men. The Government was what they, the people, made it. It was wholly wrong and undemocratic for individuals to take the law into their own hands. This lawlessness boded no good for India whether it was rampant in Pakistan or the Union. He was in Delhi to 'do or die.' He had no desire to witness the mad fratricide, this national suicide, their betrayal of their own Government. May God help them to regain their lost sanity!

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